

2023 Man of the Year

Dana Sales

Born and raised in the Pajaro Valley, Dana attended local public schools. At Watsonville High School he was on the Track and Field team, was in the percussion section of the Watsonville Wildcatz band and was elected as the Vice President of the Student Body in his senior year.

After graduation, Dana received a congressional appointment from Shirley Chisholm of New York and attended the United States Naval Academy, Annapolis, Maryland, where he participated in intramural track and squash. He also was in the Academy's Drum and Bugle Corps.

Returning to Watsonville, he has been active for 43 years serving the Pajaro Valley in many ways.

For 28 years he was a Trustee on the Santa Cruz County Board of Education representing the southern portion of Santa Cruz County and the northern portion of Monterey County. Dana was a Trustee serving on the Pajaro Valley Unified School District for seven years, making it the first time a person of Filipino heritage had been elected to public office in the history of Santa Cruz County. He was President of both organizations multiple times. He also served as Chair of the Education and Ambassadors Committees of the Pajaro Valley Chamber of Commerce.

Dana has been a local realtor for 33 years and has served as the President of the Watsonville Board of Realtors and the Pajaro Valley Association of Realtors. He was recognized twice as REALTOR of the Year. Prior to becoming a REALTOR, Dana owned Penguin Printing in Watsonville and Scott's Valley for 10 years.

Dana and his wife, Lynn have been part of the Watsonville Community band for over 27 years. He has served as President of the Band, Master of Ceremonies and announcer. In addition to the Watsonville Community Band, he has been a member of the Pacific Brass Band and the Thirsty Nine German Band.

For over 20 years, Dana has been the bilingual choir director and lead Cantor for Saint Patrick's Catholic Church.

Dana has a long history of being active in the community. He served as founding President of the Pajaro Valley Jaycees which ran the Watsonville Fourth of July Parade for 15 years.

Dana was the founding Board President of the Pajaro Valley Prevention and Student Assistance (PVPSA) for the first 10 years and Chairman of the Board of Directors of Bay Federal Credit Union for three years.

Dana has served on the boards of the Pajaro Valley Chamber of Commerce, the Watsonville Red Cross, the Cultural Council of Santa Cruz County, and the Advisory Board of the Watsonville Salvation Army. In addition, Dana served on update committees of the City of Watsonville's General Plan and served on the Planning Commission for the City of Watsonville. Dana currently serves on the Board of the Santa Cruz County Association of REALTORS.

Dana has always kept the best interests of the people of Watsonville on his mind in serving the community. He has provided outstanding qualities of leadership and positive energy to all the above-mentioned projects and organizations with enthusiasm and a "can-do" attitude. He is a self-starter with an indomitable spirit who encourages and motivates others in the community to follow his example.